



CAPT. MICHAEL CONKLIN.

CAPT. MICHAEL CONKLIN was born in New York, Sept. 29th, 1828, and was brought up and educated in the city. At the early age of nine years he ran away from home and went to sea. He made several voyages, after which he learned the trade of ship-carpenter, in the shipyard of his father, who was a partner of the late Samuel Secor.

After thoroughly learning his trade he established a shipyard at New Rochelle, where he overhauled and repaired nearly all the racing yachts of that time.

In 1854, he came to Staten Island intending to establish a shipyard near Quarantine, but subsequently changed his plans, and formed a partnership with John E. Armstrong in the business of owning and running boats, instead of building them.

The first vessel they built was the propellor Rescue, the first propellor ever built for towing service outside the harbor. She was employed by the quarantine commissioners during the quarantine season and at the breaking out of the war of the rebellion was chartered by the metropolitan police harbor for patrol. The Rescue and the Washington Hunt were chartered by the government and remained South all through the war.

In 1861, they built the Harriet A. Weed, named after the daughter of the late Thurlow Weed, who was a close personal friend of Capt. Conklin. She was afterward sold to the government and was blown up by the rebels at Newburn. The Harriet A. Weed was also used as a gun boat, and Moses Lyons now living at Totenville was captain. In 1862, they built the John A. Dix and sold her to the government. This boat is still in the service as light-house tender in southern waters.

In 1863, they bought the Sylvan Shore and put her on the New Brunswick route in opposition to the George Law, but afterward chartered her to the government, and this is the vessel which carried the troops that captured Wilkes Booth after the assassination of President Lincoln. On this trip she ran afoul of a wreck which had been sunk by the rebels and stove a hole in her side. She was kept afloat by putting mattresses in the hole and keeping the steam pumps at work until the boat arrived at Baltimore where she was put on the dry dock.

In 1866, the firm bought the Chicopee and put her on the route from New York to Amboy in opposition to the S. I. Railway and ran her successfully till 1869, when she was purchased by Sharp, Freze & Co. of Bridgetown, N. J., and was run between that place and Philadelphia.

Among the other boats owned and sold by Conklin & Armstrong were the Washington Hunt, the Maryland and the Katalidin.

In 1870, Mr. Conklin joined Wm. Mulford in the lumber and building material business, in Stapleton, and afterward the firm bought the Jessup Mill at Green-ridge.

In 1880, Mr. Conklin sold out his interest in the business, and in 1882, when the office of inspector of foreign vessels was created, Mr. Conklin was appointed the first incumbent and held the position until Sept. 15th, 1885, when he was removed by the Democratic administration. In 1889, he was appointed, without solicitation, assistant inspector of mills, and performed the duties of inspector of foreign vessels until 1893, when he was again removed, during Mr. Cleveland's second term.

Mr. Conklin was one of the founders of the Republican party on the south side of the Island, and has always been an active and influential worker in the party. He was for many years intimately associated, politically, with Wm. H. Seward, Thurlow Weed, E. D. Morgan, Moses Taylor and Gen. John A. Dix, and now has in his house at Annadale the desk on which Gen. Dix wrote the famous order, "If any man hauls down the American flag, shoot him on the spot."